

# LIT 2120.3613 World Literature: Speculative Fiction

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T Period 5-6 & R Period 6, MAT 0005

**Instructor:** Olubunmi M. Oguntolu  
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**Office:** Turlington 4323  
**Office Hours:** TR Period 7, or by appointment

## Course Description

Survey of World Literature, Seventeenth Century to the Modern Era endeavors to provide an introduction to a global perspective from multicultural voices. In our course, we will read, investigate, and write about diverse cultural, social, and political contexts informing speculative fiction. Our explorations will follow Judith Merrill's definition of *speculative fiction* as "stories whose objective is to explore, to discover, to learn, by means of projection, extrapolation, analogue, hypothesis-and-paper-experimentation, something about the nature of the universe, of man, of 'reality'." Speculative fiction's traditions create approximations of realities that reflect notions of our own realities provide frameworks to discuss literary theory and criticism from diverse points of view. Critical theoretical approaches will provide analytical frameworks to help us engage dialectics in futuristic and fantastical narratives. Through observation, hypothesis, and experimentation, we will examine key terms of modern speculative fiction, including alien visitation, reason and technology, transhumanism, and utopias and dystopias to help us draft and answer questions about identities, worlds, and existences.

## Course Materials

Butler, Octavia E. *Bloodchild and Other Stories*. 2nd ed. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005. Print. ISBN: 978-1583226988

Čapek, Karel. *R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots)*. Trans. Claudia Novack-Jones. New York: Penguin Classics, 2004. Print. ISBN: 978-0141182087

Cavendish, Margaret. *The Blazing World and Other Writings*. Ed. Kate Lilley. New York: Penguin Classics, 1994. Print. ISBN: 978-0140433722

Course Pack, available at Xerographic Copy Center, 927 NW 13th Street

Lob, Jacques, writer. *Snowpiercer Volume One: The Escape*. Art by Jean-Marc Rochette. Trans. Virginie Selavy. London: Titan Comics, 2014. Print. ISBN: 978-1782761433

Okorafor, Nnedi. *Who Fears Death*. New York: DAW Trade, 2011. Print. ISBN: 978-0756406691

Strugatsky, Arkady, and Boris Strugatsky. *Roadside Picnic*. Trans. Olena Bormashenko. Chicago: Chicago Press Review, 2012. Print. ISBN: 978-1613743416

Swift, Jonathan. *Gulliver's Travels: A Norton Critical Edition*. 3rd ed. Ed. Albert J. Rivero. New York: W.W. Norton, 2001. Print. ISBN: 978-0393957242

Wells, H.G. *The Time Machine: A Norton Critical Edition*. Ed. Stephen Arata. New York: W.W. Norton, 2008. Print. ISBN: 978-0393927948

## Course Outcomes

Upon completing World Literature, you will be able to:

1. Illustrate critical evaluation and understanding of culturally diverse authors and texts;

2. Develop and demonstrate academic inquiry and research methods of literary and cultural issues relevant to the course texts;
3. Cultivate critical and analytical thinking and evaluation informed by literary theory and criticism;
4. Identify and construct effective clear, concise, and persuasive academic writing through multiple genres;
5. Formulate, draft, edit, and revise critical research study that incorporates scholarly analysis.

### Course Assignments and Evaluation

Complete assignment and reading journal prompts with their corresponding rubrics are located within the E-learning/Sakai course site.

<b>Critical Reading Responses</b>	20%
Responses help students develop close reading skills. In each critical response, students will develop arguments to specified prompts. Your responses will provide concise, developed analyses establishing dialectics with class discussions and readings.	
<b>Close Reading Assessments</b>	30%
Assessments will evaluate how well students read and analyze the texts. Through identifications and critiques, students will demonstrate knowledge of the texts and understanding of literary terminology.	
<b>Presentations</b>	10%
Each student will conduct two presentations on critical articles relating to topics from the course readings. The presentations will demonstrate analytical assessments and responses leading to critical discussion questions to build methodologies for probing specific themes and tropes.	
<b>Critical Analysis Essay</b>	25%
Selecting among texts in the course, students will demonstrate critical reading, information synthesis, and comparative analysis. Students will provide a brief proposal to generate ideas for their prospective research to prepare for their critical analysis.	
<b>Participation</b>	15%
Participation includes attendance, assigned readings, progress conferences, homework, in-class writing activities, and class discussions. In this discussion-based course, students are expected to regularly make significant and thoughtful contributions.	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

Grading Scale							
A	93-100%	B	83-86.9%	C	73-76.9%	D	63-66.9%
A-	90-92.9%	B-	80-82.9%	C-	70-72.9%	D-	60-62.9%
B+	87-89.9%	C+	77-79.9%	D+	67-69.9%	E	0-59.9%

### General Assessment Rubric

A	Insightful: You did what the assignment asked for at a high quality level, with care and
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	precision, and your work shows originality and creativity. Work in this range shows all the qualities listed below for a “B,” but it also demonstrates that you took extra steps to be original or creative in developing content, solving a problem, or developing a style. Work in the “A” range is not only correct and intriguing, but also illuminating. Since careful editing and proofreading are essential in writing, papers in the A range must be free of typos and grammatical or mechanical errors.
B	Proficient: You did what the assignment asked of you at a high quality level. Work in this range is competent, thoughtful, and considered, but it needs revision. To be in the “B” range, an essay must be complete in content, be well organized, and show special attention to style.
C	Satisfactory: You did what the assignment asked of you and demonstrated that you have a generalized comprehension of the ideas/films/essays you’re working with. Work in this range needs significant revision, but it is complete in content and the organization is logical. Diction may be imprecise or unclear. The style is straightforward but unremarkable.
D	Poor: You did what the assignment asked of you at a poor quality level. Work in this range needs significant revision. The content is often incomplete and/or the organization is hard to discern. Support is irrelevant, overgeneralized, lacks validity, and/or is absent. Ideas/texts are oversimplified. Work in this range may have no thesis statement, or may stray significantly from the thesis throughout the essay. Attention to style is often nonexistent or uneven.
E	An E is usually reserved for people who don't do the work, or don't come to class, or those who have plagiarized. However, if your work shows little understanding of the needs of the assignment or demonstrates that you put little effort in completing it, you will receive a failing grade.

## Course Policies

### Participation and Attendance

Regular attendance and active participation are **crucial and required**. Class participation includes contributing to class discussions; coming to class on time, prepared with books and homework; preparing for in-class activities; providing adequate drafts for group work; collaborating and participating in group activities; and overall working and paying close attention to the lectures and activities of the classroom. In general, students are expected to contribute constructively to each class session.

In this course we will follow a strict attendance policy. **You will lose 10% of course participation points for each absence beyond three periods. If you miss more than six periods during the term, you will fail the entire course. Missing double-period class meetings constitutes two absences.** The university exempts from this policy **only** those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with me prior to the date that will be missed. Absences, even for extraordinary reasons will result in missing work that cannot be made up; therefore, you can expect absences to have a negative impact on grades. For more information on UF’s attendance policies, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

**Please Note:** If you are absent, it is your responsibility to make yourself aware of all due dates and required work. You will not earn credit for any in-class activity you miss due to absence. If absent due to a scheduled event, you are still responsible for turning assignments in on time.

**Tardiness:** Tardiness creates a problem for the entire class since it can disrupt work in progress. Tardiness will be reflected in lost participation points.

### **Classroom Conduct**

Please treat your classmates and myself with respect. Keep in mind that UF students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. Diversified student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class. Any use of electronic devices not related to classroom learning: phones, personal data assistants, iPods, etc. are disruptive and will not be tolerated. Please put them on silent and keep them out of sight.

### **Assignment Maintenance Responsibilities**

You are responsible for maintaining copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned, marked work until the semester is over. Should the need arise for a resubmission of papers or a review of marked papers, it is your responsibility to have and to make available this material.

### **Late Work Policy and Mode of Submission**

**I do not accept late work.** All papers will be submitted as MS Word (.doc or .docx) documents to E-learning/Sakai by **11:00am on the designated due date**. I may consider extenuating circumstances, but you must contact me at least twenty-four hours before the assignment is due. All assignments and postings should be polished and presented in a professional manner. All papers must be in 12-point Times New Roman font, single-spaced with 1-inch margins and numbered pages.

### **Final Grade Appeals**

Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant in Department of English. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

### **University Policies**

#### **General Education**

This is a General Education course providing student learning outcomes listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. For more information, see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-program.aspx>.

### **Statement of Composition (C) and Humanities (H) Credit**

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition or Humanities. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-program.aspx#requirements>.

### Statement of Writing Requirement

This course can provide 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/writing-requirement.aspx>.

### Students with Disabilities

The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>. The office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

### Statement of Harassment

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eo/sexharassment.htm>.

### Statement on Academic Honesty

All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code>.

## Course Schedule

### 6 January – 9 January

**Subject:** Introduction to World Literature: Speculative Fiction

**Readings:** Purdue Owl: [“Close Reading a Text and Avoiding Pitfalls”](#) (6 Jan)

Purdue Owl: [“Reading a Novel or Story”](#) (6 Jan)

Purdue Owl: [“Reading a Play”](#) (6 Jan)

TEDxDartmouth: [How to Read a Graphic Novel](#) (6 Jan)

LitWeb: [“Writing about Literature”](#) (6 Jan)

*Archaeologies of the Future* “The Alien Body,” “Longevity as Class Struggle,” “Fear and Loathing in Globalization” (8 Jan)

### 12 January – 16 January

**Subject:** Reason and Technology

**Readings:** “The SF of Theory: Baudrillard and Haraway,” “Artificial Humans and Construction of Race” (13 Jan)

*The Time Machine* 1-71 (15 Jan)

### 20 January – 23 January (Martin Luther King Day 19 January)

**Subject:** Reason and Technology

**Readings:** *The Time Machine* 75-155 (20 Jan)

*The Time Machine* 157-175 (22 Jan)

**26 January – 30 January****Subject:** Reason and Technology**Readings:** *R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots)* Prologue-Act 1 (27 Jan)*R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots)* Acts 2-3 (29 Jan)**Post: Critical Reading Response – Reason and Technology (29 Jan)****2 February – 6 February****Subject:** Alien Visitation**Readings:** *Gulliver's Travels* Parts I-II (3 Feb)*Gulliver's Travels* Part III (5 Feb)**9 February – 13 February****Subject:** Alien Visitation**Readings:** *Gulliver's Travels* Part IV (10 Feb)*Roadside Picnic* Interview-Chapter 1 (12 Feb)**16 February – 20 February****Subject:** Alien Visitation**Readings:** *Roadside Picnic* Chapters 2-3 (17 Feb)*Roadside Picnic* Chapter 4 (19 Feb)**Post: Critical Reading Response – Alien Visitation (19 Feb)****23 February – 27 February****Subject:** Transhumanism**Readings:** *Bloodchild* "Bloodchild," "Speech Sounds" (24 Feb)*Bloodchild* "The Evening and the Morning and the Night" (26 Feb)**Assignment Due: Close Reading Assessment Midterm (26 Feb)****2 March – 6 March (Spring Break)****No Class****9 March – 13 March****Subject:** Transhumanism**Readings:** *Who Fears Death* Chapters 1-20 (10 Mar)*Who Fears Death* Chapters 21-30 (12 Mar)**16 March – 20 March****Subject:** Transhumanism**Readings:** *Who Fears Death* Chapters 31-50 (17 Mar)*Who Fears Death* Chapters 51-1 Rewritten (19 Mar)**23 March – 27 March****Subject:** Transhumanism**Readings:** *Bloodchild* "Near of Kin," "Crossover," "The Book of Martha" (24 Mar)*Bloodchild* "Amnesty" (26 Mar)**Post: Critical Reading Response – Transhumanism (26 Mar)****30 March – 3 April****Subject:** Utopias and Dystopias**Readings:** *The Blazing World* (31 Mar)

"To the Absolute Zero of Existence: A Story from 2371," "Apoikis" (2 Apr)

**6 April – 10 April****Subject:** Utopias and Dystopias**Readings:** *Snowpiercer Vol 1: The Escape* p1-70 (7 Apr)*Snowpiercer Vol 1: The Escape* p71-110 (9 Apr)

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**Post: Critical Reading Response – Utopias and Dystopias (9 Apr)****13 April – 17 April****Subject:** Utopias and Dystopias**Readings:** “Science Fiction and Empire” (14 Apr)**Assignment Due: Close Reading Assessment Final (16 Apr)****20 April – 22 April****Subject:** Speculative Fiction’s Sense of Wonder**Assignment Due: Critical Analysis Essay (28 Apr)**

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**\*Progress Conferences**

You are required to set up at least two (2) progress conferences with me – the first by 26 February and the second by 16 April – to discuss the presentations and writing assignments you are working on. The conferences will take place in my office preferably during my office hours. It is up to you to schedule your progress conferences by emailing me in advance.